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of mutual and reciprocal obligations. Inter-personal and inter-group relations in several spheres of village affairs are governed by an established usage and social ethics. Breaches of the norms of the community and its established usage are dealt with either by the village elders or by a village council. The village council, speaking for the village, has the final authority of social ostracism through which it can effectively enforce its sanctions.

III

Modern community studies represent a very significant development in the field of social anthropology and sociology. The concepts and techniques formerly applied to the study and analysis of primitive and isolated tribal societies are now being adapted for the study of peasant communities, non-literate as well as literate, and also for the analysis of more complex and industrialized communities. This new direction in the focus of interest of an increasing number of social scientists and field-workers has inevitably led to important modifications in our conceptual framework and to a sharpening of our tools of research. The methodology of social sciences and techniques of field research have both gained very considerably from this new trend. The work of Robert Redfield, John Gillin, Sol Tax and Ralph Beals, among others, represents a substantial advance in this field, both in theory and in methodology. From Robert Redfield's *Tepotzlan: A Mexican Village* to Oscar Lewis's *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepotzlan Re-Studied* this branch of social anthropological enquiry has travelled far: the former inaugurated an epoch, which then appeared to be full of promise; the latter is a convincing proof of its maturity. On Middle America we now have a series of interesting and useful studies. In other parts of the world also important researches of this kind have been made. Studies of the great peasant societies of the East received encouragement and support from scholars both in Great Britain and in the United States. Malinowski's and Radcliffe-Brown's forewords to the works of Fei and Embree bear testimony to the interest evinced in community studies by the British social anthropologists. The work of Martin C. Yang and Francis L. K. Hsu received constructive support in the United States. A remarkable feature of some of these Far Eastern studies is that they were done not by Western scientists but by scholars

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623 564 castes; they are expected to do much more. In fact, a caste headman is the link between the residents of the village belonging to his own caste and, on the one hand, the common organization of the village as a unit, and, on the other, the wider caste organization of the entire neighbouring region. When the caste *panchayat* of the entire block constituting the regional community holds its meeting it is invariably the caste headman who participates in its deliberations on behalf of his village caste group. The office is hereditary, passing from father to son. But if the son has not attained maturity at the time of the death of his father, and is consequently not in a position to take over the responsibility, one of the brothers of the deceased may exercise the authority on behalf of the minor. In some cases even after attaining maturity the son remains only the nominal head, while his uncle continues to be the *de facto* chief. The general consensus of opinion regarding the function of the caste headman appears to be that 'he should keep his people under control' and 'not allow them to stray from the traditional ways of life'. 'If boys of my community do not behave themselves, the *panchayat* reprimands me for not keeping them under control The village headman says that I must check them, but what powers do I have?' remarked one caste headman. With regard to his functions there is a general unanimity. 'Under a good caste headman boys of the caste obey established authority, respect is shown to the elders and quarrels are not often heard from houses in his jurisdiction.' All this he must do by the sheer force of his personality, for the nature of his authority is not well defined. 'He must be strict and firm, and also considerate and helpful. If he is only strict he will not be able to get the willing co-operation of his people. If he is too lenient nobody will pay any heed to what he says.' It has been pointed out earlier that some of the caste headmen are only nominal members of the *panchayat* and that at its meetings others speak on behalf of the caste. With one exception, these caste headmen lack the above qualities, and in general their caste people do not have much regard for their views. At least two of the hereditary caste chiefs are regarded with scorn by their own people and with ridicule by the villagers. Among the successful caste headmen, E. D. R., the leader of the Kapu (agriculturist) group, may be mentioned. He is in his late thirties, but even older people listen to him. If a son does not show due regard to his parents or a husband and wife quarrel too often and too publicly;

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f one of his caste fellows fails to fulfil the terms of his obligations or in any other way brings dishonour to the caste; if boys get unmanageable or girls earn an evil reputation for easy virtue, he effectively enters the scene, gives suggestions and advice, admonishes people if they do not seem amenable to persuasion, and in the case of adolescents and young boys may even inflict light corporal punishment. In his dealings with people E. D. R. possesses some dramatic qualities which make him something of a hero to his people. With his great influence in the counsels of the village he commands obedience from his own caste fellows as well as from many others. V. P. R., in a sense E. D. R.'s rival, has also a strong personality, and although he is not the recognized head of the caste he exercises considerable control over 'his area of influence'. Because of his influence he is one of those who are invited to participate in the deliberations of the *panchayat*. However, the two men exercise considerable tact in dealing with each other, and so far there has been no effective challenge to the position of E. D. R. The position of the head in a caste is what its holder chooses to make it. Ambitious rivals can steal some of his light and authority. If he proves unsuitable he may for all practical purposes be superseded by someone who is abler or more ambitious and aggressive.

The structure of the family and part played by the 'head' in its affairs will be analysed in a subsequent chapter. It will suffice here to point out that the type of family organization in Shamirpet and the neighbouring rural areas is patrilineal and patrilocal. Joint families are regarded as ideal, although there is a tendency for sons to separate after marriage, and brothers almost always separate some time after the father's death. The eldest male is generally regarded as the chief of the household, and, according to tradition, he must benevolently dominate the scene. Younger members of the household must show respect to him and his wishes. In his turn the head of the family should treat his brothers or sons equally, 'as alike as his two eyes'. A serious socio-religious offence committed by one member of the family would result in the excommunication of the whole family. As such the head of the family must watch the actions of all the members of his household and advise, warn or admonish them according to the necessity of the situation. The head of the family is answerable to the caste and the village councils for the members of his household, and this

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476 discharge of their functions. Tradition approves of such an arrangement, and mutual trust and inter-dependence ensure its continuity. Where this arrangement is accepted, a system of attachment of some families to certain other families naturally [433] follows. Agriculture being the most important activity of the countryside, the number of agriculturists is naturally the largest in the village population. These constitute the bulk of those who require and accept the occupational services of small caste groups offering them. Even the occupational castes stand in need of one another's services, although the number of families from each caste offering them within a village community is of necessity small. Each family will, therefore, attach itself to a number of families in the village and offer them services both in agricultural pursuits and socio-religious rites and ceremonies. Among the occupational castes themselves also there is a system of family attachments in operation. In Shamirpet some family affiliations date back to the time of the foundation of the village. Later immigrants either secured the services of some of the established families of the occupational castes, or they made arrangements with some of the newcomers to the village belonging to those castes.

476 This system is both complex and delicate. It is not easy for an
623 agriculturist to remove a family attached to his household and
626 secure the services of another. For example, A, a barber, is attached to the family of B, an agriculturist. If for any reason B is greatly dissatisfied with the services of A and wants those of another, he cannot abruptly dismiss A. His difficulty will not be in dismissing him, but in finding a substitute. Each of these castes [467] has its own inter-village council. Occupational castes have a developed trade unionism, and their code of professional ethics and etiquette too is very rigid. The dismissed person will be protected by this professional etiquette. No one else would be willing to act as a substitute, for fear of being penalized by the caste *panchayat*. It may even be difficult for a number of families to join together and import a family belonging to that occupational caste from a different village. First, under these conditions of tension, an outside family would not come for fear of social pressure and ultimate ostracism for such an action. And if they do come, the caste fellows already in the village will make things very difficult, even unbearable, for them. In the course of our investigations,

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we recorded three cases of protracted antagonism between a group of employing families and the occupational caste families employed. In one of them the dissatisfied employer agreed to retain the family on its promise of doing better work in the future. In another the caste people arrived at an amicable settlement by attaching another family to the employer, and attaching the dismissed caste member to a newly-settled family in the village. The third one dragged on for a little less than four years, and, yielding to the pressure and persuasion of the village elders, the caste agreed to give a substitute. The employer in this case was a hot-headed farmer, but he was a man of some wealth and considerable influence, and as such he could secure the effective intervention of the village elders in his own favour.

According to our informants 'the system to-day is not what it was a decade or two ago'. Many attribute this change to the spirit of individualism which is now manifesting itself in several walks of life in the countryside, and is bringing about changes in the established patterns of life. 'In former times,' said an agriculturist, 'these low classes knew their position and behaved themselves well. If they worked satisfactorily they were treated by us very well. In fact, with the passage of time, our relations became more and more intimate. I remember those days when a barber's son would come into the courtyard, offer salutations to us and say "Uncle, the headman has called you" or "Mother, the ceremony in the neighbour's house is about to start and they are awaiting you." In many cases they were just like the members of our family, and although both parties maintained the traditional caste distance, we could always take each other into confidence even on matters of a delicate nature. But now things have changed. Those boys don't want to work here. They want to go to the city. They are not satisfied with the traditional arrangements of payment; and so there is difficulty.' However, the system still continues more or less in its established, traditional form. Urban contacts, education or attraction of something better or more lucrative, may distract a young man, causing him to refuse to replace his old or deceased father's services with a family to which they were attached, but one of his poorer and less ambitious brothers or cousins will always be willing to take up the work.

We shall now examine the main economic functions and activities of the major caste groups in the village.

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kin on the paternal side. The composition of the family differs in different cases. In many cases it consists only of the husband and wife, their sons and unmarried daughters. In others one or both of the parents, unmarried brothers and unmarried sisters may also belong to this unit. Brothers and sons often establish their independent houses after marriage. In the same way, old parents may come to live with their son who had separated from them a decade or two earlier.

The *peddamanshi* or literally the 'big man' is the head of several family units which together constitute this extended family or allied families. In a still wider sense, family may include another category of near-kin who are one degree removed from the cluster of allied families.

In the diagram (overleaf) lines show the relatives who constitute the allied families, and dotted lines show the near-kin. Only unmarried girls belong to the family. On marriage they become members of their husband's family.

Each elementary family can be regarded as an independent unit of the extended family or the allied families. In everyday life it is practically free from the control of the other units of the allied families. Ordinarily these branches meet only on ceremonial and ritual occasions. Importance of the solidarity within the allied families is emphasized, and it is expected that any major decision will not be taken by any branch without consultation with the senior members of these allied families. Selling or buying land, starting litigation, obtaining large loans from a money-lender, leaving the village permanently for settling down in a different locality, and fixing the date and time for socio-religious ceremonies are among the subjects on which prior consultation with the senior members of the allied families is regarded as necessary. In any case the *peddamanshi* or head of these allied families should not be ignored. Often it is not difficult to get his permission and blessings; but people ignoring him inevitably come in for social censure. If the elders find the arrogance of the younger members too great they generally express their dissatisfaction and disapproval in their talk with the other people in the village. Their refusal to participate in a socio-religious ceremony of one of the branches of their family will cause a minor sensation in the village, and the comment of the society will generally be against the junior member who ignored the elders. If the affairs of any branch are in a

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bad way, the elders of the allied families are expected to intervene. Scandals or dishonourable behaviour in one unit are likely to spoil the name of all the allied families, and as such tradition enjoins elders to advise, warn and even admonish the erring members. A young man given to excessive drinking, gambling or any similar vice would often be admonished by the elders of this extended family. If he cannot keep his wife under control, or if the quarrels of the two become very frequent and too public, the neighbours would convey the information to the elders of the extended family and expect them to use their initiative in putting things right. In all such cases they will be within their customary rights if they intervene. They can demand that their advice is heard and followed.

Within the family unit the eldest male is generally regarded as the head. His wife or the next senior male is given the second place. A respectful son very often describes his old widowed mother as the 'head' of the family. However, in many cases the *de facto* head of the family may be a son under whose guidance and supervision the land is cultivated or the craft or profession of the family is practised. Parents dominate the scene in their youth and early middle age. With approaching old age they gradually recede to the background. Nominally they remain the heads of the family, but their sons are left more or less free to conduct the management of the family property and profession as they like. As long as the father remains the real head of the family, the internal management of the family remains the charge of the mother. Sons are expected to obey her and the daughters-in-law are expected to carry out her instructions. Any failure or reluctance on the part of a daughter-in-law to carry out the wishes of her mother-in-law leads to constant quarrels and complications, and in many cases to ultimate separation. Between sons and daughters, as a rule, preference is shown to the former, but if the sisters have considerable seniority in age, their younger brothers are expected to respect and obey them.

In the village community of Shamirpet, which has considerable variations of caste and class, and significant differences in education and urban contacts, it is only natural to expect great variations in the family ideals and ethics of the different groups. In the themes of their idealizations, the different sections of the population show striking similarities; but in their attitudes and reactions

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live with them. They think that this ends their tutelage under their father and establishes them as independent members of the community. The parents do not necessarily share this view, and consequently in the period that follows there is considerable stress and need for understanding and accommodation on both sides. The son is divided between loyalty to his father and his new-found desire for independence on the one hand; his affection for the mother generated by close association from the day of birth and his attraction for the wife on the other. During this stage the parents cannot punish or chastise their sons; they can at best advise and warn. When repeated advice and warnings do not have the desired effect, methods of employing pressure or ridicule are resorted to. Pressure may be brought to bear on the son through village elders, other influential people and even through his friends. Stories about sons who forget their duties and responsibilities towards their parents because of their wives are legion. Socially it is bad form to be engrossed completely in the wife to the neglect of the parents; it is worse to deny them the respect and courtesy that is their due at the bidding of the wife. The traditional norms of respectful behaviour must be observed in dealing with parents. Intimate subjects, particularly those having a bearing on sex, should not be discussed in the presence of the parents. Opinion should not be proffered unless it is asked for. All forms of endearment must be avoided by the husband and wife in the presence of the elders. It is not very proper for a young father to fondle and kiss his child too often when his parents are present. Finally, parents should not be abused or beaten; as far as possible differences should be smoothed out by peaceful means. Nevertheless, when there are acute differences in the points of view of the parents and children, exchange of hot words and loud quarrels between them are not uncommon.

Tradition lays down fairly strict norms regarding the treatment of old dependent parents. A son failing in his duty of providing adequately for his old parents, and not caring sufficiently for their comforts, particularly during illness, invites strong social disapproval and comment. He is regarded as a bad example. Elders, well-wishers and friends are bound to remind him repeatedly about his obligations to his aged parents. At this stage the old people are expected not to interfere with the domestic management of the household, and as a price for this non-interference the

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still resident in the village. Tradition emphasizes the necessity of solidarity between brothers, even if they live separately. They should stand by and support one another in the hour of need. Indeed, there are considerable misunderstandings and consequent quarrels between families, but they do co-operate and support one another when serious situations arise and call for such assistance. Those who fail to rise to the occasion and do not behave in the expected way are criticized by the community and may even be admonished publicly by the village elders. However, regarding the general tone of inter-personal relations between brothers it may be said that it is not characterized by deep sentiments and affection. Understanding is desirable, but it is believed to be rather difficult to attain. However, ties of kinship inevitably bring them close to each other on ritual occasions and in moments of distress.

OTHER RELATIVES WITHIN THE FAMILY

Brief mention may be made here of certain other categories of relatives who live together in the same house within the joint family.

Grandparents are believed to be indulgent. It is said that they 'always spoil the grandchildren'. It is remarkable that persons who have had a reputation for being very 'strict fathers' behave in an altogether different way with their grandchildren. They are lenient and friendly towards them, and indeed take a lot of interest in them. Amusing grandchildren and being in turn amused by them is one of the favourite pastimes of the grandparents. Most of the time they can be seen fondling them or carrying them about. When their parents are angry with them, young children often take shelter with their grandparents. Very few grandparents ever complain about the behaviour of the little ones, and they would rarely spank them.

An uncle must be treated like the father and an aunt like the mother. But in this relationship much depends on the age and personality of the uncle. If he is nearer in age to the children than to the father, he is regarded as a superior kind of elder brother, but if he is nearer to the father in respect of age, he is feared and respected by the children. Often the children develop their pattern of relationship with an uncle on the basis of his character and personality. 'Some uncles are friendly. They allow us considerable

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the Erkalas, the men occupy themselves with hunting and trapping, while women weave mats and seek some additional income by fortune-telling. Among the Madigas males deal with dead animals; women come into the picture only when the meat has to be carried home and cooked. Both men and women may work at curing hides. Shoe-making and other leather-work is mainly done by men. On ritual and ceremonial occasions, musical instruments are played only by Madiga men.

Earlier it has been pointed out that men avoid tasks which are generally known as 'feminine'; and women in their turn are expected not to undertake pursuits which are traditionally regarded as 'masculine'. It is true that during the illness or absence of his wife, a man has to perform some of her domestic duties, but that is obviously a compromise with necessity. Any man taking undue interest in feminine tasks soon earns the unenviable epithet of 'half-woman', and is exposed to the ridicule of the community. Asking a man to do some feminine work would be almost tantamount to questioning his masculinity. 'Put bangles on your wrist, husk the paddy and cook the meals', is a remark often used in reproach to admonish those who lack manly qualities and courage. A woman going out of her way to do anything which is regarded as 'man's work' is noticed and adversely commented upon by the society. It is unthinkable that a woman can handle the plough. It should be pointed out here that sometimes a woman deliberately undertakes to do masculine work to 'bring home' to the husband the realization that he is not fulfilling his manly obligations and thus to awaken him to his proper responsibilities. Middle-aged women and widows can do some men's work without social censure.

Reference has been made to the six basic age divisions recognized in the community. Among the 'rich' and the 'well-to-do' families children do very little; but among the 'average' and the 'poor' they have to help the parents. Grazing the cattle, assisting parents in their work in the fields during the busy season, looking after younger siblings, and running errands are regarded as children's work. The girls have to help their mother in the kitchen. As they grow up their share in work gradually increases. Boys take more interest in 'outdoor' work, whilst girls are absorbed in the domestic routine. During this stage of life the 'grown-up boys and girls' even of rich and well-to-do families have to apply

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come forward very readily to help those who need it. It is common to suspect others' motives; and not unusual to be always on the alert to read hidden meanings into the seemingly innocent utterances of others. Analysis of their life-histories shows that the people are not given to introspection. They are always on the defensive; but their inter-personal relations are not characterized by detachment. In their thoughts, likes and dislikes they are quite open, and all persons having even casual contacts have a fair acquaintance with one anothers' ideas and attitudes

It is not uncommon for people to analyse and describe the personality-traits of other inhabitants of the village as well as of outsiders coming into the settlement. Positive qualities, having obvious approval, find expression in such epithets as: 'good person', 'hard-working', 'honest', 'respectable', 'well-behaved', 'intelligent', 'generous' or 'large-hearted' and 'faithful'. Epithets describing negative traits which do not meet with social approval are many and varied, and among others include: 'bad person', 'lazy', 'dishonest', 'shameless', 'mannerless', 'foolish', 'miserly', 'small-hearted', 'unfaithful', 'good-for-nothing', 'liar', 'all talk but no deeds', 'ill-tempered', etc. Analysis of such traits is firmly established in the culture-pattern, and occupies an important place in the conversation of the people when they meet in small groups. Although conformity to social norms is idealized and emphasized, when there is a breach of traditional ways the person responsible likes to confess it in confidence to someone else. Long conversations and the mutual sharing of secrets are quite frequent. However, when friendships break up the sanctity of earlier secrets is not protected by any code of honour. Within limits originality and innovation are admired; but excess and ostentation lead to social censure and ridicule.

Subjects coming under the critical eye of society are: i breaches of traditional norms, ii display and exhibitionism, iii [illegible] iv efforts to rise in the power hierarchy, v conspicuous [illegible] and vi originality and 'too many new ideas'. Carrying tales and 'whispering about the doings in others' houses' go on in the community on a wide scale. It is criticized by the aggrieved persons and their sympathizers, but no one regards it as inherently bad. 'Incidents' or breaches of established norms are discussed in small conversational groups at first, and the more important ones among them gradually filter through and reach the respon-

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sible village elders. Few such breaches escape the attention of society, although in many of them no action may be called for by the caste or village elders. Display and ostentation are severely criticized in the community. Individuals inviting social censure for this fact are frequently nicknamed and mimicked. The behaviour of persons who have just come into wealth or a position of authority is subjected to a particularly critical scrutiny. Sexuality, in all its different aspects, provides another popular theme for gossip. Although bragging about unusual potency and sexual adventures is very common, in general the community watches and comments upon all abnormalities, particularly excessive indulgence and lacking adequate sex vigour. The comments of the group in this sphere are merciless. Those who are on the higher rungs of the ladder of power hierarchy jealously watch their own position, and anyone casting a covetous eye on a position of influence at once becomes the target of the criticism of several pressure groups in the community. People attaining conspicuous success are invariably the subject of malicious criticism. Their actions and speech are closely watched, and later commented upon. Opportunities for criticizing them are eagerly sought, and indirect references to their humble origin are frequently made. Finally, persons having too many novel and original ideas also invite the criticism of others. While people are unsparing in their comments, they are very much reserved in their praise.

Anger is freely expressed. Loud shouting, use of foul language, and occasions of physical violence are the principal channels for the expression of aggressiveness. Sentiments of love and friendship are also publicly expressed; the only exception in this case being the suppression of all sentiments suggesting sexual intimacy.

Concepts of 'manliness' and 'defending the honour' play a significant part in governing inter-personal relations within the community. It is not manly to beat anyone who is too young, too aged, weak or infirm. On the contrary, a fight between equals is always considered fair, although it may necessitate action on the part of village elders. Notions of personal and family prestige differ in different castes, as well as at different income levels. Any challenge to personal prestige or family honour is bound to arouse a violent reaction.

Truth and straightforwardness are acclaimed as social ideals; but intelligent and ingenious ways of deception too receive

LIVING TOGETHER